SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
STRATEGIC FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE
UNITED STATES SENATE

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

PRESENTATION TO THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
STRATEGIC FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE
UNITED STATES SENATE

SUBJECT: Status of Air Force Nuclear and Strategic Systems

STATEMENT OF: Lieutenant General James M. Kowalski, Commander
Air Force Global Strike Command

March 28, 2012

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
STRATEGIC FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE
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Introduction

Chairman Nelson, Ranking Member Sessions, and distinguished Members of the Committee; I am honored to appear again before you today as the Commander of Air Force Global Strike Command, representing nearly 24,000 dedicated Airmen and civilians.

Our mission at Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC) is clear. We organize, train, and equip combat ready forces for nuclear deterrence and global strike operations with an intense focus on ensuring a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal and global strike force to support the President of the United States and the Combatant Commanders.

As we move forward in reducing our force to the New START levels, I am confident that with your support our Airmen will meet that mission while demonstrating the disciplined professionalism our nation expects of the stewards of this fundamental national security capability.

Air Force Global Strike Command Update – Organize, Train, Equip

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on the command by discussing the initiatives and challenges to "organize, train, and equip" our force so we remain ready across a broad mission set. Only through constant attention to readiness metrics can we responsibly balance fiscal austerity with ready forces to support the combatant commanders for nuclear deterrence and a broad range of conventional missions.

Organize

During this past year, our Command grew with the transfer of nuclear weapons Munitions Squadrons from Air Force Materiel Command. This transfer to Air Force Global Strike Command further strengthened the nuclear enterprise through enhanced unity of command and streamlined operational coordination. Additionally, we activated a new munitions division at the headquarters to provide advocacy, guidance and oversight to the conventional, nuclear, and armament systems activities across the command.

We also strengthened the nuclear enterprise through our efforts as the core function lead integrator for Air Force nuclear deterrence operations. In support of the Air Force corporate planning and programming structure, we developed the Nuclear Deterrence Operations Core Function Master Plan (NDO CFMP) in collaboration with key stakeholders across the Air Force. The NDO CFMP aligns nuclear deterrence strategy, operating concepts, and capability development. It is a long range plan that forms a reference point for helping the Air Force mold its strategic priorities, risks, and tradeoffs.

As we looked for opportunities to improve our nuclear deterrence operations, we won approval to serve as the chief architect for the Air Force Nuclear Command and Control system. This strengthens our role as lead program manager for 13 nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) systems and programs. In this capacity, AFGSC created a roadmap to effectively sustain the Strategic Automated Command and Control System through 2030.

We also found that by developing a governance structure of stakeholders in our key weapon systems we were able to establish relationships and understanding that has led to continued improvements in weapon system performance and faster solutions to problems. These General Officer Steering Groups for the B-2, B-52, Minuteman III, and UH-1N ensure decision-makers prioritize and resolve key sustainment support issues.

To better support our missile wings, AFGSC adopted the Schlesinger Report recommendation to renew the assignment of intelligence officers to the missile wings. Today, those officers fill a critical gap, providing a better understanding of real-world events and deploying a number of intelligence tools that were not previously accessible. Our missile wing intelligence officers are also playing a vital role in ensuring the safety and security of our nuclear weapons and personnel through support for force protection and anti-terrorism programs at the wings.

We also continue to refine our Nuclear Surety Council (NSC). The NSC is a quarterly meeting across our enterprise to identify nuclear surety issues and track them to resolution. During the course of 2011, the NSC successfully monitored and closed a number of issues to include improvements to nuclear convoy security, implementing technical order changes at ICBM Launch Control Centers, increasing missile field security by upgrading land mobile radio coverage, and completing permanent repairs to flooded defense access roads used to reach launch facilities in North Dakota. The success of the AFGSC NSC in 2011 ensured continued strengthening of the nuclear enterprise.

As part of our efficiency efforts, we reviewed our ongoing operations and adjusted how we provide forces to U.S. Pacific Command under the Continuous Bomber Presence (CBP) mission. We transitioned deployment duration from four to six months and changed our logistics and support concepts to reduce the rotations of aircraft, tools, and parts. These actions yielded $21M of savings in annual flying hours and logistic shipment costs.

Train

In partnership with Air Combat Command we reviewed and prioritized our aircrew training to better align with the missions the combatant commanders have told us are most important to them. We have improved the execution of our flying hour program and established benchmarks for sortie production. The most critical training in our bomb wings—for operations, maintenance, munitions and support--is done by generating the sorties needed to meet the weekly flying schedule.

AFGSC played a major role in US Strategic Command's (USSTRATCOM) capstone nuclear exercise, while also directing the first major command-level nuclear operational readiness exercise in over 20 years. These two major exercises serve to focus the command's nuclear training and provide recurring mission emphasis.

Conducting inspections is an essential command function, and we have made significant progress in this area. Over the course of the last year, the command conducted 19 scheduled and no-notice inspections of which 15 were focused on strategic bomber and ICBM nuclear mission areas. We also established an Inspection Deficiency Review Board to track deficiencies indentified during our unit inspections. This deliberate process puts the command staff's attention on both the deficiencies and corrective actions.

Another command initiative is to reduce, synchronize, and integrate all non-nuclear inspections, audits, assessments, and evaluations into a consolidated unit inspection regime providing commanders at every level a more comprehensive organizational assessment of readiness and compliance. This initiative, coupled with our efforts that de-conflict and synchronize inspection and exercise schedules, provides a more predictable unit calendar allowing our wing commanders additional time to focus on individual and small unit training.

Exercises and inspections are important training tools, but we are also using competition to promote esprit de corps and stimulate tactical innovation. Global Strike Challenge 2011 marked it's the second year as the Air Force's premiere bomber, missile, security forces, and maintenance competition. The competition is rooted in the rich heritage of Strategic Air Command's Proud Shield, Giant Sword, and Olympic Titan competitions. Global Strike Challenge has become an event that Airmen across the command eagerly anticipate and has contributed to improved morale, pride in our mission, and a culture of excellence through the crucible of competition.

Equip

Air Force Global Strike Command is the lead command for the B-2, B-52, Minuteman III, and UH-1N weapon systems. We identify requirements, advocate and program for resources, and maintain weapons systems stewardship for these mission-critical assets.

B-2

Our 20 B-2s represent the nation's only long-range bomber capable of penetrating advanced enemy air defenses in an anti-access, areal denial scenario. The B-2 is the most modern bomber in America's arsenal, yet it is approaching 20 years old.

The President's budget contains critical B-2 sustainment initiatives, to include $656M for modernization of the B-2's Defensive Management System which will improve aircrew awareness and facilitate avoidance of modern and future air defense threats. This system is crucial to the B-2's ability to hold any target at risk by penetrating enemy air defenses.

The B-2 has other important requirements to be addressed in the future. A secure, survivable, strategic communications path is required as current communications systems rapidly approach the end of their service life. We are working a more affordable very low frequency/low frequency solution to prevent a nuclear-survivable communications gap while we await the maturation of a common EHF SATCOM terminal for integration on the B-2.

B-52

The B-52Hs flying today entered service from 1961 to 1962. Regularly updated over the past 50 years, the dual-role capable B-52 is capable across the range of military operations and employs the widest variety of ordnance in the fleet.

We are celebrating this year as the "*Year of the B-52*," marking both the 50th anniversary of the last delivery of a B-52 to Minot AFB, and the 60th anniversary of the first test flight of the YB-52. This aircraft may be the most universally recognized symbol of American airpower, and its contributions to our national security through the Cold War, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Kosovo, Iraqi Freedom and Allied Force are remarkable. We invite Congress to join us in this celebration.

Of course, there are B-52 sustainment issues we must address. The President's Budget request contains $24M for a 1760 databus to the B-52's internal bomb bay. This upgrade will enable the B-52 to carry 20 J-series "smart" weapons instead of 12, and the internal carriage of smart weapons also

improves the aircraft's fuel efficiency. Finally, this upgrade will allow us to carry mixed internal weapons loads, providing even more flexibility for Combatant Commanders.

Future B-52 requirements include a data link and voice communications to facilitate net-centric warfare operations envisioned in the Air/Sea Battle concept. The aging radar on the venerable bomber will also need to be replaced within the next decade as sustainment costs grow and failure rates increase.

Minuteman III

The Minuteman III ICBM is the least expensive and most responsive leg of the nuclear triad and is fundamental to ensuring strategic stability with nuclear peers. The Minuteman III dramatically complicates any adversary's offensive and defensive plans, and hedges against technical or geo-political surprise.

The Minuteman III system became operational in 1970 with an expected life span of 10 years but still maintains an alert rate of over 99 percent. We thank Congress for funding a number of sustainment programs to include replacing the boosters, upgrading environmental controls, modernizing security and support equipment, and procuring new reentry system payload transport vehicles.

The President's FY13 budget request fully funds warhead fuze replacement initiatives in partnership with the Navy, a new transporter erector, and continues effort toward the next solid rocket motor program. We continue to closely examine emerging needs to include guidance systems upgrades to ensure Minuteman III reliability and readiness through 2030.

UH-1N

With the proposed termination of the Common Vertical Lift Support Program (CVLSP), also known as the common support helicopter (CSH), the Air Force will continue to fly UH-1N "Hueys," with a focus on two critical national security missions: nuclear asset security for Air Force Global Strike Command and Continuity of Operations (COOP)/Continuity of Government (COG) taskings for the Air Force District of Washington.

The average age of the UH-1N fleet is over 40 years old. Anticipating the Air Force may fly the UH-1N for another decade or longer, we must selectively modernize the UH-1N to minimize existing capability gaps and to avoid increased sustainment costs brought on by obsolescence. These efforts include

making the cockpit fully night vision compatible, upgrading the sensors to better support our security mission, and performing some delayed safety and sustainment improvements. We will continue to look for pragmatic and creative ways to mitigate risk with the current fleet.

Long Range Strike Family of Systems

We are strong advocates and partners in the development of a Long Range Strike (LRS) Family of Systems that will provide a visible deterrent and global strike capability well into the future. The Air Force LRS strategy uses a Family of Systems construct consisting of three precision-strike pillars: a Long-Range Strike Platform (LRSP), a Long Range Standoff Missile (LRSO), and a Conventional Prompt Global Strike (CPGS) capability. Work continues on the Analysis of Alternatives (AoA) for LRSO to replace the Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM), though recent budgetary realities have resulted in a 2-year slip of this program. The AoA will be completed in late FY12 and will be used to inform future funding decisions.

We are also eager to make progress with Air Combat Command in developing and fielding the new Long Range Strike Bomber. This bomber will be essential in providing capabilities needed for strategic deterrence of adversaries fielding advanced anti-access and area denial weapons. Those capabilities must include penetrating denied airspace to find and efficiently engage mobile systems and time sensitive targets.

Ground Based Strategic Deterrent

In March of 2010, USSTRATCOM/J8 requested AFGSC initiate mission requirements analysis for the Ground Based Strategic deterrent (GBSD), the follow-on system to the Minuteman III. The Nuclear Posture Review reiterated the need and stated that although a decision on any follow-on ICBM is not needed for several years, studies to inform that decision are needed now.

In January of last year, we began the Capabilities Based Assessment (CBA), which is the first step in the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) process. The CBA was a joint effort of a team composed of representatives from across the Air Force, OSD, and the joint force. The CBA took a “strategy to task” look at higher level guidance and from that guidance, identified those tasks required to meet our mission objectives. The next step is to conduct a formal AoA identifying potential solutions and provide comparative cost, effectiveness, and risk assessments of each. This work is scheduled to start in mid-FY13.

Challenges and Conclusion

Our challenges for the next year include continuing to develop a culture where every Airmen embraces the special trust and responsibility of our nuclear deterrent mission, maintaining our excellence in conventional missions across the range of military operations, and finally enhancing and sustaining the current force while modernizing for the future.

Mister Chairman, our Airmen continue to rise to these enduring challenges and they have made measurable improvements across the command. It is my distinct privilege to lead them through the challenges, and opportunities, our Nation faces. I assure you and this committee they remain fully committed to executing all current missions to the highest standards, and I know their professionalism allows Air Force Global Strike Command to stand by its motto: *To Deter and Assure*.